Claim 36 (currently amended): A diagnostic reagent for hepatitis C virus (HCV) infection comprising a solid phase sensitized with (a) a genetic recombinant HCV antigen having a molecular weight of 10,000 or more and (b) one or more conjugated HCV antigens, wherein the conjugated HCV antigen comprises a synthetic peptide ~~HCV antigen~~ conjugated with a carrier protein and the synthetic peptide has a molecular weight of less than 10,000.

Claim 37 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen is selected from the group consisting of core antigen, NS4 antigen and NS5 antigen.

Claim 38 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen is selected from the group consisting of HCV non-structural region proteins and HCV structural region proteins.

Claim 39 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen comprises core antigen, NS4 antigen and NS5 antigen.

Claim 40 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the carrier protein and the HCV antigen of the conjugated HCV antigen are present at a ratio of about 1:3 to 1:20 (carrier protein: HCV antigen).

Claim 41 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the carrier protein comprises a water-soluble protein.

Claim 42 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 41, wherein the water-soluble protein is selected from the group consisting of BSA, ovalbumin and hemocyanin.

Claim 43 (previously presented): The diagnostic reagent of claim 36, wherein the genetic recombinant HCV antigen is conjugated with a carrier protein.

Claims 44 to 50 (canceled)

PAGE 3/3 * RCVD AT 8/30/2006 7:59:50 PM [Eastern Daylight Time] * SVR:USPTO-EFXRF-6/34 * DNIS:2730904 * CSID:8587205125 * DURATION (mm-ss):01-30